

THE Reconstructionist

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No. 6

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CORRESPONDENCE

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EDITORIALS

A FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

IT was the eve of the Bermuda conference. After weeks of intensive agitation on the part of organized Jewry, after added weeks of delay and uncertainty, the conference was called at last, not exactly where interested parties might have wished, but in Bermuda. Nevertheless, the distressed and harassed Jews dared hope that soon some decisive steps might be taken to rescue surviving Jews and bring them to Palestine. It was just then that Prime Minister Winston Churchill arose in Parliament and announced that, when the remaining 29,000 certificates had been disposed of, further immigration into Palestine would cease. Realistic observers of the Jewish scene realized that a statement of tremendous and tragic consequence had been uttered.

They realized at the same time, however, that Churchill's statement was not the ultimate in devastating developments. They sensed, intuitively, that somehow Jews would find their way into their rightful home, though they might have to sneak in at night, like thieves, like driven and hounded criminals. What caused perhaps even deeper hurt was the con-

spiracy of silence surrounding Churchill's report. The newspapers ignored it. The editorial columns shunned it. Had it not been for those zealous Jewish groups who, through paid advertisements, grabbed the world's lapel and shook it hard to call its attention to this new blow to Jewish hope, the average American would not even be aware that Churchill had spoken. Much as we disapprove the violation of Zionist discipline involved in public utterances by the New Zionist Organization, we must in all honesty be grateful to that organization for the documented and dignified advertisement in *The New York Times* which appeared over its name, quoting chapter and verse of British official statements revealing the cruel *volte face* of England's present war-time leader.

Never before have sensitive Jews experienced frustration and helplessness quite to the same extent, because this time they felt the terrible need for a voice, a voice that would cry out and pierce the ears of the decent, liberal, well-meaning but frightfully ignorant America. If only American Jewry had now a voice whose words could be blazoned across every news-stand of the country, to catch the eye of the student, the patient in the doctor's waitingroom, the soldier lounging in the U.S.O. club! But we are silent. We have

not even the voice that the Communists have, or the Negroes, or the Christian Scientists, or the Policemen or the Irish. We are endowed with many intellectuals, writers, cartoonists, editors, columnists, script writers, short story writers; but we have not that one endowment which could unify them into a force for the articulation of our needs and hopes.

The Yiddish dailies are still powerful. They are gradually declining, however, and they are naturally limited to Jews. The weeklies are, by and large, unequal to the task which needs to be done. They are not informative enough, well written enough, sufficiently broad in their interests to attack the news-stand trade. Perhaps the forthcoming American Jewish Assembly may undertake, as one of its major jobs, to publish a vigorous newspaper, one worthy of the Jewry which the Assembly represents and of the world Jewry which it seeks to save.

Worse indeed than to be persecuted is to be forgotten. We Jews are in danger of becoming the Forgotten People unless we bestir ourselves and get ourselves a voice that will thunder back at the statesmen who today, with impunity, rise in parliaments and condemn peoples to inevitable death.

THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL'S PROGRAM FOR EMERGENCY INTERCESSION

THE Synagogue Council of America has sent out a letter to every rabbi, containing a plan for utilizing the Sefirah period between Pesah and Shabuot as a time of mourning for the fate of the Jews of Europe and of intercession on their behalf with the conscience of mankind. The letter contains detailed suggestions for awakening "the religious spirit of our people to respond to this greatest calamity that has befallen our brethren" and for rousing public opinion in general to come to the rescue.

The program includes suspension of all festive activities during the Sefirah, the observance of Mondays and Thursdays during the period as partial fast days (omitting one meal, preferably the morning meal, and contributing in lieu thereof to a special *Pidyon Shevuyim* Fund to be disposed of by the U.J.A.), setting aside the first week of the period as an intensified time of mourning "in the tradition of *Shiv'ah*," setting aside Sunday, May 2 as the Day of Intercession, with a children's memorial service in the morning instead of the usual Sunday school session, special radio broadcasts and interfaith gatherings in the evening. (The day has already been set aside by the Federal Council of Churches as a Day of Compassion on Behalf of the Jewish Victims of Nazi Barbarism).

The Synagogue Council is to be commended for this action. True, there have been previous demonstrations of solidarity with our fellow Jews in Nazi-occupied territories. But an effective organized demonstration by the American Synagogue as a whole remains a desideratum. It is something of a historical achievement for the three branches of the Synagogue in America—the Orthodox, the Conservative and the Reform—to unite on a common ritual, regardless of the occasion. More such united action will go a great way in enhancing the prestige of the synagogue as an institution and its effectiveness as an influence in Jewish communal life.

We hope that the program proposed by the Synagogue Council will be carried out. To that end we suggest that individual congregations affiliated with the national bodies represented on the Council—and, for that matter, congregations that may not be connected with these organizations—plan at their own meetings their participation in the national effort. The plan of the Council must not remain a paper program. The

congregations must accept their share of the responsibility and mobilize their own membership in its behalf.

And one more suggestion is in place, which should perhaps have come from the Council, but in any case involves no interference with its plans. As the letter addressed to the rabbis by the Synagogue Council states, "our people are not callous, they are only bewildered and void of counsel. Every rabbi has been confronted with the frequent demand of his congregants—'What can we do? What can I do?'"

Even the answer of the Synagogue Council to this question, however, is not wholly satisfactory. To ask Jews to have recourse to the traditional resources of "penitence, prayer and good deeds" is not enough unless we can tell them what they must repent of, for what purposes they must seek divine aid in prayer and what good deeds can make amends for the tragic suffering that our sins have contributed to bring about. The only action recommended, other than ritualistic action, is a contribution to a *Pidyon Shevuyim* Fund to be administered as part of the U.J.A.

But does not the situation call for more than this? Is not the fundamental aspect of our tragedy the fact that, as a minority group, we are everywhere at the mercy of the majority and everywhere impotent in the face of mass-hatred directed against us? Is not the sin of which we must repent our isolationist indifference to this situation as long as we in America were not the immediate victims? Ought not our prayers be for the wisdom, courage and virtue to achieve a status of freedom, security and creativity for the Jewish people in the modern world? And ought not the good deeds called for by the situation include not merely the redemption of the captives, but the redemption of the nation through the abolition of Jewish homelessness and the up-

building of Eretz Yisrael as the national home of the Jewish people? Perhaps it was impossible for the Synagogue Council, with its cumbersome system of voting, to achieve unanimous endorsement of such a program in time for action. But let all those congregations who feel as we do incorporate these suggestions in their observance of the Sefirah period.

We cannot resurrect the dead. We can do little, except by supporting the American war-effect, to redeem those held captive in Nazi-occupied territory. We can perhaps render some help to those who manage somehow to escape across the borders of Nazidom. But we can and we must appeal to the conscience of mankind to remedy once and for all the situation of Jewish homelessness. The conscience of the world needs to be sensitized to this problem. The promises made to our people after the first World War are being shamefully repudiated. Only recently Churchill announced in Parliament the determination to stop Jewish migration to Palestine in 1944. The world must be held to the pledges made to our people, or else our martyrs have died in vain. And ours is the responsibility. "If we are not for ourselves, who shall be for us? . . . and if not now, when?"

VICIOUS CLASS LEGISLATION

THE rider which Congress attached to the bill authorizing an increase in the public debt from \$125,000,000,000 to \$210,000,000,000 is one of the most vicious bits of class legislation of which any parliamentary body has been guilty in recent times. That rider prevents the President from imposing a maximum limit of \$25,000 to salaries during the war. It does so by repealing a previous grant of power to reduce wages or salaries "to the extent that he finds necessary to correct gross inequities and also to aid in the effective

prosecution of the war." The Congress knew that the President would veto this measure if presented as a separate bill. It probably also knew that the people of the country—except a portion of the relatively small number that earn more than \$25,000 and their political satellites—would back the President, and that his veto would probably have been sustained. It therefore used the disreputable political trick of attaching its measure to the bill increasing the public debt although the rider was irrelevant to that bill's purpose, so that the President could not veto the measure without jeopardizing the financial support needed for the war.

The actual material effect on the nation of the defeat of the President's purpose to limit salaries may not be great. The poor would not have become much richer by the placing of a salary limit. But the moral effect is of tremendous importance. We are fighting a war which calls for the utmost sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life itself if necessary, on the part of every citizen. We can justify our government's spending the lives, taxing the fortunes, and restricting the liberties of the individual to the extent that they interfere with the war effort, only if this war is being fought for the common man. The nation believes that it is being fought for him, and desires that it be fought in his interest. But Congress, in this legislation, proclaims that it has other designs.

The glaring inequity and arbitrariness of the Congressional action have been clearly exposed in the President's statement, from which we quote the following:

"But the Congress has chosen to rescind my action limiting excessive salaries without even attempting to offer a substitute. The result is that Congress has authorized the drafting of men into the Army for \$600 a year, regardless of whether they

are earning \$1,000 or \$100,000 a year but has refused to authorize the reduction in the salary of any man not drafted into the Army, no matter how high his income may be. At the same time the stabilization program enacted by the Congress requires wage increases to be denied to workers earning \$1,500 a year even when their employers are willing to pay those wage increases. *The essence of stabilization is that each should sacrifice for the benefit of all. This principle the Congress has failed to recognize.*"

Apologists for the Congressional action explain it in various ways but cannot explain away, to the satisfaction of the discerning, the shameless catering of Congress to the interests of the wealthy. It has been said that Congress acted merely to rebuke the President for the assumption of extra-ordinary powers and to restore legislation by Congress in place of executive decree. This is manifestly disingenuous. The powers exercised by the President were conferred on him by Congress as necessary war measures. And, if Congress now feels that it has granted too much power to the President and if its only object is to limit his power, why does it not repeal its grant of authority to fix the upper limits of the wages of labor as well as of the salaries of management?

Again, it is argued that limiting high salaries would have little effect since profits are not limited. The President himself answers that argument by rebuking Congress for not having devised an alternative proposal which would have imposed similar limitations on profits.

Finally, it is argued that the salary limitation stems from a dangerous economic doctrine which would deprive able men of the incentive to employ their ability. Apparently \$600 is considered enough of an incentive to men to serve their country in the Army when the country has need of their services, but the coun-

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REALITIES AND VALUES

THAT GRACIOUS LADY AND wise diplomat from abroad, who has been thrilling so many American audiences by her eloquent addresses, Madame Chiang Kai Shek, recently touched on a subject that is very close to us Jews. She expressed her opposition to the Mandate System of the League of Nations for use after the present war and suggested that some method more akin to a trusteeship than political and economic domination by one power be worked out. We are entirely in agreement with her, particularly in respect to the future of Palestine. By putting disingenuous interpretations on the Balfour Declaration and ignoring the

directives of the international Mandates Commission, the government of Great Britain has made it evident that she did not regard her administration of Palestine as a trust but as an exercise of imperial dominion. If Madame Chiang's advice will not be taken and the Mandate System will again be applied after the present war, we should recommend—although we do not expect our recommendation to be taken seriously in the higher circles of diplomacy—that the mandate over Palestine be transferred from Great Britain to China.

▼

WE SHOULD LIKE TO CALL THE attention of those American Jews who see in the Yishuv only an object of philanthropy that Palestine Jewry is not always on the receiving end of philanthropic endeavor. A dispatch of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency from Jerusalem, dated April 6, tells us of a special delegation being sent by the Jewish National Council of Palestine to Tripolitania to organize economic aid and social welfare for the liberated Jews there. Nor is this the first time that the Palestine Jewish Community has distributed aid outside of the country. At the time of the pogroms in Iraq, similar action was taken. And if we compare the sacrifice made by Palestinian Jews on behalf of Jewish refugees with those made by American Jewry, the scales weigh heavily in favor of the Palestinians. But they would probably be offended by having these sacrifices labeled as philanthropy; from their viewpoint, their unselfish action is merely an expression of a natural love of kin and a recognition of the mutual bonds that unite a people struggling for its existence.

▼

MAY 23RD HAS BEEN DESIGNATED by the United Jewish War Effort as American Jewish Heroes' Day. We deplore the necessity for such a day. It should be assumed that every element in the American population responds wholeheartedly to the call of the nation in time of national emergency. If then we wish to honor those who have given heroic service to the common cause, there should be no need for dividing our heroes according to race, religion or nationality. We Jews are well aware of our stake in the war and are not disposed to boast of our doing what it is clearly our duty to do. Unfortunately, however, the vicious libel accusing Jews of cowardice and lack of patriotism has been raised and we dare not let the libel go unchallenged. We do not expect that the observance of this day will silence the scurrilous liars, nor that those who want to believe the lies about us will be deterred thereby from believing them. But there are many who have not yet been thoroughly infected with anti-Semitism and who might be immunized against this particularly vicious form of anti-Semitic propaganda by a celebration which will publicise the record of Jewish heroism in the war. Let us at least hope that it will deter some of our Jews from believing the charges of our enemies.

Jews should be particularly concerned about the integrity of family life in wartime. A people living as a minority that tries to keep its culture and religion alive must depend ultimately upon the family unit. On it all communal life is built: the synagogue, the community center, the school and related institutions. For that reason Jews should observe Family Week, May 2-9, as recommended by President Roosevelt. The Synagogue Council of America is representing the Jews in the interfaith committee in charge of the Week. Groups desiring to arrange programs should com-

municate with the Synagogue Council of America and request the leaflet prepared by them, containing suggestions for observance. This problem should concern us all year round.

HERE ARE VITAL STATISTICS:

The Jewish Education Committee has just released figures on enrollments in the religious schools of New York. There are 517 schools listed, representing a registration of 58,845. Of these, 11,334 attend only *one time a week*. The total number account for only 25 percent of the children of school age. At one time or other, about 70 percent of the children are exposed to some religious education. These discouraging and challenging figures are closely related to the above-mentioned question of family life in the United States. If so few of our children are to be found in schools at any given moment, the answer undoubtedly lies in the failure of the family to utilize the proffered cooperation of the religious school in developing the character of the child. A good part of the answer lies also, however, in the failure of the schools to turn out products which might inspire emulation. This is a problem of the first magnitude, and it is time that some of our star communal leaders buckled down to it. Fund-raising? Yes. Good-will? Yes. Pulpitizing? Yes. But, without a system of universal education, it is all building on sand.

TOO BAD THAT THE FOREIGN Policy Association should have chosen Dean John S. Badeau to write the latest Headline Book entitled "East and West of Suez." Badeau is clearly unsympathetic to the Jews and inclined to "understand" the Arabs better. He insists, for example, on defending them for assuming that the McMahon correspondence included Palestine. Since the Agreements did not mention Palestine by name, the

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God and the World's Evil

By MILTON STEINBERG

The Problem

IN these days of catastrophe, Job's riddle haunts us with a persistence that will not be denied: How, in the presence of the vast misery of mankind, the slaughter of innocents, the staggering stupidity and irrationality of human behavior, the cumulative victories of brutality and lust, and the complacent tolerance of the scheme of things toward all these evils, is it possible to believe in God?

From one point of view there is nothing new in the question. The necessity of justifying the ways of God to man is as old as the God-idea itself. Today's misgivings and perplexities are, except in scope and intensity, akin to those wrung from other hearts in other times. But differences of degree are significant. Between the tickling of the fine point of a pin brushed across the skin, and the sharp flash of pain when metal plunges into flesh, there is only a difference of degree. But anyone who has been stabbed knows that he has not been tickled. It is no personal, private sorrow which now cries for explanation, but the universal agony of mankind, and not merely a present evil but the threat of greater evils yet to come.

Besides, in the war now in progress moral issues are manifestly involved. Perhaps the right, in its purity, is not all on one side, nor the wrong on the other. Yet there would appear to be at least a preponderance of truth, freedom and compassion with one set of the antagonists. Of these values, religion has made much. Of them it has asserted that they represent the will of God, and as such are both the way to salvation and, in the long run, invincible in human affairs. The evidences indicate otherwise. The wicked

prosper mightily at the expense, if not of the righteous, at least of those less wicked than they. The greater ethical integrity of the defeated has served not a whit to save them from catastrophe. Those who put their trust in keeping their powder dry have seemingly been much wiser than those who reposed it in a God and moral order. For centuries, preachers have insisted that men prevail not by strength nor by power but by the spirit. But what shall one say in these days of tanks and Stuka bombers?

From such problems the atheist is exempt. As he sees it, the whole universe is no more than the purposeless interplay of matter and energy. In its blindness, it is altogether indifferent to man's aspirations, completely insensitive to what he has defined as right and wrong. If events turn out immorally, there is no occasion for perplexity since, after all, the scheme of things is both irrational and unmoral. Herein is to be discerned what may well be the only advantage of atheism. It need not trouble itself with the riddle of theodicy.

But for the religious mind the issue is acute. For it is the essence of faith that, behind or above the Many and the Phenomenal, stands God, that God is Spirit, that is to say, Reason and Moral Will, and that the world of things and men, since it is an outward expression of Him, must partake of His nature. But if God be, then irrationality and evil ought not be. Yet, they are. Can it be then that God is not?

This is the doubt which haunts the hearts of millions who believe and half-believe. It presents a challenge with which, as a matter of honor, duty and elemental self-concern religion must come to grips.

Two Requirements of An Adequate Theodicy

It was John Stuart Mill who once pointed out that no proposition is disproved until it has been refuted in its best form. By the same token, the paradox of evil in a God-motivated universe cannot be said even to have been fairly propounded unless both the God faith and the phenomena which seem to deny it are adequately stated, the former in its most mature shape, the latter with maximal realism.

In other words, there is no sense in trying to talk the problem away by denying the reality of evil. Embarrassed theists have, from time to time, sought escape along this path. They have argued that evil is nothing in itself, that it is only the absence of the good. Or, alternatively, they have insisted that ugliness, wrong and irrationality are actually delusions of thought. They have even contended that evil is in some dark and mysterious fashion a good. Now, to be sure, it is true that, in a sense, all evil is a lack of some more desirable condition, that all pain is subjective in character, and that we are sometimes better off for having suffered. But this transparently is not the whole story. The question remains: Why? Why should our souls have been so faultily fashioned that they are capable of such gross errors? No, the dilemma of evil is not one to be verbalized out of existence. To attempt to talk the problem away is simply not good enough. It cannot make experience intelligible, which is the very purpose of thought. Nor is the victim of tragic circumstances helped in the least by such devices. Who would dare offer such solace to a mother whose child has been smashed to bits by a bomb, or to a man who rots in a concentration camp for no other offense than his unselfish devotion to the best interests of mankind?

Nor is the problem of evil to be solved by charging human nature with responsibility for it. Mankind, no doubt, has contributed generously to the misfortunes which now plague it. Knowing the right, it has perversely elected the wrong. Acknowledging the validity of certain ethical principles, it has stubbornly refused to live in conformity with them, thus bringing upon itself war, revolution and mass misery. A case in exoneration of God can be made on this count. But not a full case. For not all evil is of human authorship—earthquakes, droughts, blizzards, tidal waves and famines, for example. And even such evil as can be charged to man's moral failures serves only to raise a deeper question. Man is himself a creature. Why, given a benevolent creator, should he have been fashioned so faultily? Why under the divine hand should he have been moulded into a being ignorant, perverse and cruel? Is not the potter liable for the deficiencies of the pot, particularly if the clay be of his own choosing? Besides, why should the righteous who abide by the law be compelled to share in the penalties imposed on those who transgress it? It may then be true that men are now rendering expiation for their own misdeeds. It is certainly desirable that they shall recognize that circumstance and mend their ways. The fact remains nonetheless that the entrance of a plea of guilty for mankind does not, of and by itself, constitute an acquittal of God.

But if one term of the equation must be stated in all its grimness and actuality, the other ought correspondingly be represented in its clearest, most sober expression. God is variously conceived. In the same congregation, confessing the same creed, different persons will mean radically different things when they invoke His name. There will be those whose notions are childish, confused, unreasoned; others whose ideas are lucid, tempered

by reflection and refined through criticism. By the former, God will be pictorialized naively, perhaps as a patriarch who, seated on a celestial throne and surrounded by angelic hosts, supervises the affairs of the cosmos with unerring sight and by means of direct miraculous intervention. Such a conceit—it cannot justly be called a conception—is, incidentally, by no means limited to the religious. Many an atheist, no better informed, visualizes God in just this fashion, so that his atheism amounts to no more than this: he does not believe in the existence of an old man in the sky.

Now, in a free society, every person has the right to any theological opinions he prefers, no matter how crude and primitive. Yet there is an ethic of thought as of behavior, in the light of which man is under the obligation to strive after clarity and purity of idea. A second-best religious understanding is therefore a violation of the moral code of the intellect. Furthermore, it cannot possibly be equal to the large issues which it is called on to make comprehensible. Nowhere is this truth more vividly exhibited than in the matter which concerns us here. For an immature God conception can offer interpretations of evil only on its own level. Since God is a glorified man, His actions must be interpreted anthropomorphically. Either therefore He is being wanton and capricious with His world or else He is fulfilling some mysterious design known only to Him. In either case, we are denied understanding of our experiences. Our quest for insight is frustrated. We must content ourselves with the sorry, unprofitable thought that, while what befalls us seems to make nonsense, it does have meaning to God. But since one of the major functions of religious faith is to render life intelligible, the whole enterprise ends by defeating itself.

Yet, even on the plane of the sophisti-

cated and philosophical, God is variously conceived. No sooner, therefore, do we grant that any significant theodicy must be drawn in terms of a full-ripened theism, than the issue arises, which theism? If we were concerned with an exhaustive treatment of our subject, we should proceed to a description of every God idea and a statement of how each in turn deals with the issue before us. The reader will, in all likelihood, be better served by the presentation of a specimen position. To this end, I offer, as the *corpus vile* of an experiment in the reconciliation of the world with God, the theology I know best and most intimately—my own.

It is not the only acceptable theism. God, as the Reality of all realities, will inevitably overflow my set of concepts and all the sets of concepts which man can fashion to capture His essence. Considering the same Being, different men will, depending on their individual capacities and points of departure, catch different aspects of it. Alternative constructions of God must be forever possible.

Nor do I pretend that there is anything radically novel in my viewpoint. Quite the contrary, its antecedents are ancient, honorable and a matter of public record. The student of philosophy will readily detect in it traces of Berkson and Hegel, the neo-Platonic *logos*, the Stoic *Pneuma*, the Rabbinic Shekinah and *Memra*. What is more, it is, except for certain minor details which may be peculiar to me, representative of a large segment of contemporary religious opinion.

But just because it is not advanced as the only possibly theology, just because it is neither original nor unique, it is all the better capable of serving as a trying-ground on which the God faith in one fairly typical form can be tested as to its tenability in the presence of evil.

The Universe As the Manifestation of God

The entire universe, as I see it, is the outward manifestation of Mind-Energy, of Spirit, or to use the older and better word, of God. God is then the essential Being of all beings, though all beings in their totality do not exhaust Him. It is His reason which expresses itself in the rationality of nature, in the fact that all things behave in conformity with intelligible forms, in the fact, in brief, that the world is cosmos not chaos. His power moves in the dynamisms of physical reality. His will is the impulse behind the upsurge of life on this planet. Individualized, He is the soul of man whose thought processes are infinitesimal sparks of His infinite fire, whose moral aspirations are fragments of His vast purpose, whose yearning to create is but an echo of His cosmic creativity. And He is an ethical being, not so much in the sense that He enters into ethical relations with His own expressions, as in the deeper sense that He is the fountainhead and sanction of man's moral life. The human quest after freedom, truth, goodness and beauty are but the splintered spearhead of the divine drive. So to me, the whole panorama of earth and sky, the tempestuous progress of living things, the tortuous career of humanity are the external shell of a process wherein God realizes His character.

Such is my belief.

Yet no sooner do I state it than a large question arises which is both legitimate in itself and, as we shall see, relevant to the matter at hand: On what, in reason and experience, does my affirmation rest? In another age, I would have answered simply: On faith; and men would have understood. They would have known at once that I was affirming a proposition which could not be altogether proved but, for the acceptance of

which, sufficient reason existed. But the word *faith* has to the modern ear acquired unhappy and derogatory overtones. It is charged, even for thoughtful persons who should know better, with connotations of intellectual laziness, obscurantism and even perverse attachment to the irrational. I shall then employ a term which means substantially the same thing but whose flavor is more acceptable to the modern palate. I shall assert that my God belief is a hypothesis, interpreting the universe as a whole. The intellectual grounds on which that faith rests, I have set forth on another occasion.* Suffice it, for the present, to recall that in my opinion the religious affirmation is no unique and unparalleled enterprise. It is but an application, to the business of interpreting reality-as-a-whole, of a technique general to reason, one which is exhibited with especial vividness in the physical sciences. A man may, I suppose, avoid the God conclusion but only by refraining from the attempt to construe the cosmos, or by refusing arbitrarily to employ to that end the normal processes of thought. So soon, however, as one undertakes to comprehend what lies behind the face of things and thinks systematically on that issue as he thinks on others, the God faith, I am convinced, is both in reason and practice inescapable.

How to Treat the Problem of Evil

And still evil remains.

We have contended that the God concept is the only adequate principle of explanation for the universe, that it is, as it were, a solvent in which an obscure and turgid world dissolves into luminosity. But even with God the solution is not altogether clear. Precipitates persist, dark residues that defy liquefaction. The mis-

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giving assails us that our solvent is not good enough. Logic and life's needs lead us in one direction, the fact of Evil drives us in the other.

It is an old and tragic paradox which confronts us: The sons of God have assembled and lo, Satan is among them. Are we then trapped in an impasse so that we must forever vacillate between *aye* and *nay*? Or is there a way out?

If there be an exit, it most certainly does not consist in rejecting the God-idea. This we have affirmed for valid and sufficient reasons. Let us abandon it and we shall have landed straight from the frying pan into the fire. For if, in the light of the theistic scheme, we have our difficulties with evil, with the atheistic case we shall have larger and greater troubles. We shall be forced to explain how the blind workings of matter and energy shall have produced a rational world, how the purposiveness of animals and men shall have evolved out of cosmic pointlessness, how human freedom and intelligence shall have been the product of brute mechanical necessity.

Besides—and this is a circumstance which is often overlooked—the evils which seemingly deny God are themselves rational. When a man slips on the ice and breaks his leg, the event is a misfortune to him, but it is not irrational. Indeed, so completely intelligible is it that an osteologist who knew in advance the composition of the bone, the fulcral point and the stress to be brought on it could have predicted the fracture. So with other calamities of life — avalanches, diseases, manias, these are all comprehensible in reason. The geologist, physician and psychologist respectively, understand them and find in them not violations but corroboratory instances of scientific law. Whatever emotional protests the experience of evil may evoke in man, whatever moral perplexities it may occasion, it constitutes no affront to his

purely intellectualistic insights. The fact that evil itself is not without its logic has suggested to some metaphysicians a possible resolution of our riddle. This would consist in affirming God as the rational, that is intelligible, essence of all things but in making of Him an unmoral being. Recurrently in the history of human speculation, harried and weary theologians have taken refuge in this device. As an escape from our paradox, it is obviously inadequate. A God who is beyond, and unrelated in nature to, the categories of good and evil, fails as a principle of explanation of man's soul. He is unequal, pragmatically, to those needs of the human heart which drive men to seek out their deities. Neither in logic nor utility is He enough.

But if, on the one hand, we cannot refuse to take cognizance of evil, if, on the other, we cannot reject God, and if, beyond all these, we cannot dissociate Him from the mishaps, injustices and anguish of life, then one course, and one course only, remains open to us. We must affirm God boldly and then see what becomes of our dilemma. We must, without in the least minimizing the tragic experiences against which we protest, inquire whether they cannot somehow be made compatible with His existence. Perhaps we shall discover on closer consideration not only that God is denied by evil less sharply than we imagine but also that He illumines it and makes it intelligible.

The Place of Evil in the Cosmic Process

The evils to which we are subject are many and grievous. We are in body the slaves of time, space and causality. Like stones, we can be wounded or shattered by the forceful impact of other objects. Like plants, we are forever beset by invisible enemies which seek to penetrate our defenses and maintain themselves in life by feeding on, and so destroying us, the host organisms. Like animals, we are

driven by hunger, thirst and desire and can die in agony for want of food, water or air. Worst of all, we are all actually or potentially the victims of the stupidity, cruelty and rapacity of that most feral of all beasts, man. All the woes of all that is, of the mineral, of the vegetable, of the animal are ours. If ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, if the individual reviews in his biological career the history of his race, and his race that of life as a whole, then it would seem that man has carried over into his existence all the disabilities of all the orders of being through which he has passed. And to this catalogue, he has added some items peculiar to himself—an awareness of his distresses, loneliness, bereavement, frustration and disillusionment.

If there are advantages to being human, there are transparently large and tragic disadvantages as well. Yet, given the scheme of things, it must be so. For man has emerged through, and stands astride, the animal; the animal the plant; the plant the mineral. The whole of life is a gigantic acrobatic feat in which the tumblers on top are mounted, level after level, on the shoulders of those below. The limitations of the nethermost will be those of the uppermost also. Let the one who stands lowest be in a particular place at a particular time, and the whole superstructure must be there with him. Let him tremble, and a quiver will pass upward through the entire edifice.

Now mankind at the top of the heap has a character of its own, a nature which, from the religious viewpoint, is an especially vivid instance of the Spirit behind the whole process. Humanity, theism would say, partakes of Deity and exhibits Him with peculiar distinctiveness. As God is the Reason in all things, so man is capable of thought and of the knowledge of the truth. As He is freedom, creativity, a resident in all souls and the source of all goodness, so His mortal in-

dividualizations yearn after freedom, will to create, strive after insights into other hearts and aspire after ideal ends. In traits held in common with the divine, the humanity of mankind consists. In the manifestation of those traits lies its goal. Which is exactly what the old theologians had in mind when they insisted that man exists for the glory of God.

But even as we set forth to fulfil our destiny, in the midst of our realization of it, the conditions of our being remind us forcibly that we are also kin to the mineral and, like it, prisoners of time and space; near relative to the plant and, in consequence, exposed to bacterial attack, hunger and thirst; blood brother to animals and, like them, engaged in competitive struggle, like them capable of rage, hatred and bloodlust.

The nature of evil now becomes clear. It is the survival of the circumstances of lower strata into higher; the carry-over of the limitations of the orders of being on which man's existence is based into his personality and society. It is then a reality, but one that is essentially relativistic. For the factors that offend us are legitimate on their original scene. They are not inherently wrongful; they become such on being translated into other realms. That one stone has broken another appears to us a matter devoid of ethical significance. It is an altogether different story when a stone wounds a human being, for that event prevents his self-fulfilment. We would not say that the sullen ferocity of the gorilla represents an immorality on its part. But we do believe ourselves confronted with sin when man is sullenly ferocious. Childishness, whether of the individual or the species, is after all appropriate to children and to be expected of them. It becomes disturbing only when it survives into grown persons.

So regarded, the whole evolutionary

record is the tale of the hangover of restraints. More deeply considered, it is the saga of life's continuous victory over them. The vegetable has transcended the mineral, or it would have remained inorganic; the animal the plant. And as for man, the heritage of the beast is still powerful in him. He can be irrational, cruel, destructive. What more could fairly be expected of so recent an upstart? But already he holds in his hands, though in crude and primitive form, the instruments for continuous ascent: the intellect and skills which shall progressively emancipate him from his bondages, the moral insights and principles which shall subdue what remains of the inner beast.

Now let us put this entire process in religious rather than naturalistic terms. Let us see indeed whether it is susceptible of such statement. For this is the crux of the matter before us: Is the God hypothesis adequate to account for the whole story of reality, including the unhappy motif of evil that runs through it? Can the solvent which reduced so much to lucidity dissolve the dark residues also?

The emergence of life, as the theist sees it, is no blind eddy over a directionless stream. It is the progressive incarnation of a cosmic Thought-Will. The Spirit which drives the whole movement is forever involved in its own revelations, and yet forever transcending them. God as He mounts from level to level is, like an embryo bursting forth from the womb, still stained and flecked with the stuff of His immersion. Yet He has no sooner begun to give birth to a new self-manifestation than the traces of the old commence to fall away. Man's inhumanity to man, which troubles us so deeply, is of just such a character. It is, from the religious viewpoint, a caul still firmly fixed to the infant, but destined to be sloughed as, under the divine impulse, mankind grows to fuller stature.

Our crucial question—Can God be if evil is?—has now answered itself. There is nothing in one term which is incompatible with the other. Indeed, under the religious hypothesis, the essential nature of evil becomes explicable. It is the still unremoved scaffolding of the edifice of God's creativity.

Perhaps we would have preferred that it had all been otherwise, that our consciousness, conscience, creativity and moral freedom had sprung into being full blown, untrammelled and untroubled by the heritages of lower orders of being. Certainly, even when we accept the scheme of things, we are impatient with its slowness, with the irregularity and tardiness in which truth and goodness and liberty rise from out of blindness, bestiality and bondage. But it is with reality as given that we must deal; of things as they are that we are speaking. To account for the world not as we would like it but as we have it, to strengthen our hearts, not steadfast as we might desire them but frail as they really are—the God faith is an indispensability. And there is nothing in that faith which is controverted either by the fact of evil or the unhurried tempo with which life surmounts it.

The Advantage of the Theistic Hypothesis

It is a long and weary way which our inquiry has led us. And now that we approach its end, it may be pertinent to inquire wherein we are the better off for having undertaken the journey.

We have, to be sure, found an escape from an intellectual impasse. This indisputably is something. The solution of any paradox, no matter how academic, is, under any circumstances, a legitimate and worthwhile human enterprise. What is more, we have at the least mitigated the contradiction between those factors in our experience which proclaim a God and those which would seem to deny Him.

This is even more. For the God idea is one of the most significant in the realm of reason. The vindication of it is an urgent and momentous business.

But evil is more than a concept to be harmonized neatly with others, more than an abstraction about which exercises in logic can be conducted. It represents a grim, fearsome, concrete reality with which every human being who has ever lived has, each in his own fashion, been called upon to deal. The weight of it is especially heavy in this age of travail. Across the seas whole peoples suffer and perish. And we, whose destiny is bound up with theirs, who are made one with them through sympathy, carry something of their burdens in addition to our own. Is there then, in our God faith and in the light it throws on evil, anything of wisdom, solace and courage which shall enable them and us the better to endure our destiny?

This much at least is gained—insight. There are occasions when anguish is so fresh and so acute that it swallows up everything except the consciousness of itself. For these hours, there is perhaps no remedy at the disposal of human wisdom. But, in the main, reason either continues to function or speedily reasserts itself. Then understanding can be a great strength, provided that it is the understanding not only of the *how* but of the *why*. Men can bear up under agony, they can even elect to undergo it, if they feel that some purpose is served thereby. What they find more intolerable than pain itself is pain that is pointless.

But, given the religious assurance, men perceive why and to what end they suffer. What wounds them in body and spirit is the past of the world still clinging tenaciously to its present. Meantime, they are participants, even if in the smallest degree, in God's travail as He gives birth to a new order not only of things but of being. So their ordeal is invested with

meaning, a meaning that is not merely personal but universally human, and not only human but cosmic.

Understanding their role, men can perceive their duty also. It is in the direction of reason, freedom, creativity and compassion that God is moving through them. In the attainment of His goals lies therefore their obligation and, *sub specie aeternitatis*, their function. This commitment to truth, freedom and mercy is, to the religiously minded, of vastly larger significance than it can possibly be to those who arrive at it out of purely secular considerations. To the eye of faith, these objectives are no matter of private preference nor even of reasoned conviction. They constitute a program written into the scheme of things, a design for man implicit in the ultimate God before man had yet come into being.

A confident hope, an assurance of a final victory over evil are the last consequences of the God faith, to those who hold it fast. On the heart of the agnostic and atheist there lurks forever a haunting grisly fear: Since all is chance, our ideals too are chance. The same fortuity which called ideals into existence may wipe them away. In the end the whole contest may lead to a stalemate or the wrong may emerge triumphant. Not so with the believer. He does not fight alone, nor in human company only, nor with his heart torn by doubts over the outcome. Behind him, in him, beside him and before, works that Power that drives the universe which is also a Power that makes for righteousness. So much then can religious faith achieve against the experience of evil. It can open our eyes, until, like Elisha's lad, we see "the chariots of fire" which hitherto were invisible to us; it can cause us to hear the cheering emboldening words:

"Fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that are with them."

A Hebrew Arts Project

By MOSHE DAVIS *

Status of the Hebrew Movement in America

FOR a generation, the expression, "Hebrew Movement," has been more prayer than fact. Limited to a handful of zealots, qualitatively inexpressible but quantitatively infinitesimal, the Hebraists in this country, banded on a frail craft, pitched and tossed amongst the waves of cultural assimilation. Tempest-tossed, they could but raise the masts of a few Hebrew periodicals and sundry annuals. Yet, as one flimsy attempt after another was frittered away in the wind, a sturdier and more solid substitute was courageously raised in its place. Undying devotion and ceaseless effort have in this case been amply rewarded, for this month the Histadruth Ivrit (National Organization for Hebrew Culture) celebrates its silver jubilee.

Although we are delighted that the Histadruth Ivrit has survived, and at times even thrived, in the face of almost overpowering difficulties, even the most ardent devotees of the Hebrew Movement must confess that its influence has been limited and its sphere of action narrow. But a small fraction of the American Jewish community is warmed by its life-sustaining rays, while the preponderant mass of Jews in this country comfortably entrust the knowledge of Hebrew to the Rabbi and professional Jew.

This distressing state of affairs has slowly impelled the adoption of a more realistic attitude on the part of the Hebrew activists in this country. They, with the exception of a few literary die-hards, have finally recognized that an increase

in the volume of Hebrew publications, important as they are for the "in-group," will not solve the problem. A more variegated and intensified program of action has been the result of this recognition. In recent years, the spontaneous growth of a Youth Movement, the establishment of a Hebrew Camp, *Massad*, and the addition of educators and laymen to the Executive Committee are indications of the more realistic trend.

As yet, however, all of these new projects, vital and indispensable, are directed toward the small percentage of affiliated Jews, who have an affirmative attitude to Jewish life and possess a speaking or reading knowledge of Hebrew. The circle has not been widened. New devices have been fashioned to capture the hearts of the already attached. To confine the activities of the Hebrew Movement to *Hebraists* is to limit oneself to the dream phase of community-planning. Any real cultural enterprise must grow from direct, day-to-day contact with the source of all group expression—the people. The Hebrew Movement must organically affiliate itself with larger community forces, not only for the sake of propaganda and financial support, but in order to root itself firmly in the American soil. For this reason, the aims and activities of the Hebrew Arts Committee, represent an attempt—as yet in its incipient stages—to work on two levels simultaneously, to serve both Hebrew speaking Jews and those who do not speak Hebrew.

Activities of the Hebrew Arts Committee

The concrete efforts of the Hebrew Arts Committee are predicated on the proposition that a close and vital relationship

* Chairman, Hebrew Arts Committee, Histadruth Ivrit.

exists between the arts and Jewish life. We conceive the arts to be transmitters of moods, of feelings. Through the arts, the strongest of human bonds may be established, the bond of a shared emotional experience. Through such a medium, the message of Judaism may be brought to our people with clarity, conviction and force.

The translation of this belief into action calls for a tremendous expenditure of energy, time and funds. Only a combination of organizations can plan a revitalized Jewish arts program in this country. Because the Committee recognizes that the Hebrew arts are but one aspect of the total sphere of Jewish creativity, it notes with pleasure that other cultural agencies devote themselves to the vast and worthy body of Yiddish creativity, and urges that still other organizations foster significant contributions in the Anglo-Jewish medium. The Hebrew Arts Committee has ever been prepared to cooperate with any cultural force in the development of specific techniques, such as art publications, exhibitions, recordings, an art library—in fact, anything which may lead towards the establishment of a healthful climate in which the Jewish arts may truly flourish.

Apart, however, from this broader desire to participate in the development of a Jewish Arts Movement in this country, it has a more specific aim which rises out of the very nature of its ideological commitment to the Hebrew movement in America, of which it is an organic part. There is a wealth of material buried in the recesses of a language, known to but a few, which has strength and potency, and which, if unearthed, discovered and translated, may add increased vitality to the total Jewish cultural enterprise in this country. The Hebrew Arts Committee, therefore, consciously limited itself to that specific realm of Jew-

ish creativity dictated by its ideology and capacity, namely, the *Hebrew* arts.

Its conception of the Hebrew arts, broadly defined, embraces artistic creativity by Jewish artists on Jewish themes in the Hebrew language. When considering the individual fields of art, however, this criterion must be viewed more specifically. In the field of literature, the medium must be Hebrew but the content may be either Jewish or universal. Its dramatic productions, when voiced in the Hebrew language fulfill the same requirements; if rendered in English, then only translations from Hebrew artistic creations and moods that are essentially Jewish are used and when words are sung, they are in Hebrew. In the dance, as well as in the graphic and plastic arts, the themes are based on Hebrew sources. These criteria, it must be recognized, cannot always be rigid, for the subjective element enters into the classification of every creative piece.

In keeping with its arts orientation and particular commitments, the Committee developed, with the aid of the Histadruth Ivrit and the Jewish Education Committee, art groups in as many fields as the budget allowed each year. In the field of literature the organization published a Hebrew organ, entitled *Niv* (Expression), which served as a training ground for potential American-Hebrew writers. During the five years of its existence close to seventy young people contributed original stories, poems and articles; and a number of these contributions were successful in entering Palestinian and American literary journals. A dance group, *Rikkud Ami* (Dance of My People), has functioned successfully for the past six years under the very talented direction of Miss Corinne Chochem. Miss Chochem is a recognized choreographer in the creative and folk dance. Last year, the efforts of the *Rikkud Ami* were climaxed by a nation-wide television broadcast over

WABC, and by participation in the National Dance Festival held at Madison Square Garden. In dramatics, *Pargod* (Curtain) has seen steady progress in the quality of its presentations. Mr. Jacob Rothbaum, formerly a member of the Vilna Troupe and director of Maurice Schwartz's production, "Sender Blank," was appointed coach of the augmented dramatic unit. Last year an unusual evening of Hebrew theatre was shown to New York audiences when Mr. Rothbaum's production of Contemporary American-Hebrew literature was performed. The *Sharon Choral Society* is conducted by Rabbi Avraham Soltes. Last year, the musical organization offered a full evening of Joe Engel music at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. This year the Committee initiated the *Kinor Sinfonietta*, an orchestral unit devoted exclusively to the presentation of Jewish compositions. The group is directed by Mr. Siegfried Landau, young and gifted composer-conductor. The *Kinor Sinfonietta* is but an humble beginning of what may some day become a significant contribution to the Jewish arts.

In summarizing the work of the Hebrew Arts Committee and in evaluating its effect upon the community, it is proper to say that the foundation for its future projects has been carefully laid. It is developing an audience which is learning to demand artistic integrity as well as original Hebrew content. It has also succeeded in interesting some leaders of our community at large, who are helpful in advancing the total program, and serve as members of a co-opted executive committee. It has trained and directed scores of participants in the Hebrew Youth Movement art groups, who undoubtedly will bring their training to bear in all their future spheres of influence. In addition, the artistic interests of many young Jewish artists have been directed

into the Hebrew field. Above all, many new forms of Hebrew creativity have been explored, not the least of which is the introduction and application of the Biblical folk custom of *Bikkurim*, an annual concert, at which the creative fruits of the season's work are brought to the "Temple of Hebrew Art."

The climax of six years of planning was reached this past month when, for the first time in the history of the Hebrew Movement in America, the message of the Hebraic Arts was brought to the attention of the masses of non-Hebrew-speaking Jews. At this "audition evening," the Committee's art groups presented excerpts from their repertoires that might be used by local organizations in their cultural endeavors. The inaugural presentation before so representative an audience may well mark the real *bereshit*, of a Hebrew Arts movement in America.

Projected Activities

The responsive chord which was struck in the hearts of this select audience of educational and cultural leaders in New York (apparent in the written comments and suggestions received) encourages the Committee to publish plans for a more permanent Hebrew Arts structure. The Hebrew Arts Committee dedicated to the cause of a vital Hebrew Arts movement in America, seeks to concretize its long-term aims in the following projects:

A) The creation of a school for the Hebrew Arts.

B) The training and situating of professional art groups.

C) Development of the Arts as an instrument of the Hebrew Movement.

D) Extension Activities in non-Hebraic circles.

E) Arts Library.

F) The organization of the scattered audience for Hebrew creativity.

The Creative of a School for the Hebrew Arts.

The school, as envisioned, will cater to the large numbers of young people and adults who are interested in creative self-expression. It should provide training in the general art techniques as well as adapt Hebraic content materials to the individual arts. As its name signifies, this school must be experimental, encouraging young artists to express themselves on Hebraic themes. Choral, dance, dramatic and orchestral amateur societies would be developed as the pedagogic projects for the training of the students. An annual "Bikkurim" festival would bring these members of the school before the public on a non-professional basis.

Professional Art Groups.

The next level, that of the professional units, is meant for those who have completed the course of studies in the school or its equivalent. The professional groups—a dance team, a dramatic unit, augmented quartet or chorus—should be made available to Jewish organizations of all types, through the agency of an artists' bureau. Indeed, it would be advisable to establish a week-end theatre, where on Saturday and Sunday evenings significant artistic programs in music, dance and drama would be staged. Periodic exhibitions of art ought also be arranged (as the Artef arranged theirs) as part of this Hebrew Theatre project. Operating on a cooperative basis, the participants in such professional activity will carry the message of Hebrew Culture to the masses of Jews in this country.

Development of the Arts as an Instrument of the Hebrew Movement.

Even our intensively trained Jewish youth, particularly in America, require years of social life in a Hebrew milieu before they can acquire freedom and ease in Hebrew speech. Most of them give up at the very start, for it is psychologically frustrating to have one's lips sealed by another language, when the English tongue is the key to immediate speech.

Only those who have struggled through such a process in their own lives can fully appreciate the value of the arts in effecting such a milieu. The arts, used as an educational-organizational device, have not only the value of "release," but actually motivate Hebrew learning to a great extent. The members of these amateur and professional groups should make themselves available to the organized Hebrew Youth Movement, which consists in the main of American born and bred youngsters. By helping the organization of Hebrew-speaking youth about the arts, a normal, healthy and creative environment may eventually prevail.

Extension Activities into the Non-Hebraic Circles.

For years, active youth and adult groups have clamored at their respective meetings for aid in the teaching of Hebrew songs and folk dances, or for effective renditions of modern Hebrew literature. As a result of the training which individual members of the amateur and professional groups will receive, they will be prepared to serve as field workers amongst the various Jewish organizations; not only in the role of concertizers, but as teachers. Members of local branches could be trained to put on Hebrew projects, form small choral groups, etc. Through this channel, the Hebrew arts would finally penetrate the home and enrich the life of the individual Jew.

Creation of an Art Library.

Most of the published material in all fields of art has been confined to the desks and drawers of a few professionals. Much of this invaluable material has never been seen except by a select few. Were we only able to bring these treasures together in a centrally situated library, how great would be the benefit to all concerned with Jewish creativity! Illustrated lectures, exhibitions and historical researches are but some of the tasks which the library could initiate. Perhaps

one of its most significant tasks would be the publication of a "roll call" of Jewish artists, thus granting them community status. This library should be housed in the proposed school.

F. Developing an Audience.

Finally, through the efforts of these art groups, both amateur and professional, and by means of recitals, exhibitions and publications, there will undoubtedly be created a discriminating public that will not only be desirous of patronizing Hebrew art, but will also be aware of its potentialities for self-fulfilment. As the present scattered audience will be knit together, additional groups will be launched, and the creative arts will at last be appreciated as a vibrant force in Jewish life. A new dimension may thus be added to the total sphere of Jewish life in this country.

These plans, projected for a war-torn community, may seem but empty vision. Yet the faith that impels us to work for "a people's peace," for a Judaism revitalized, and for a Hebrew Movement in the Diaspora, tells us that, if these things may come to pass, lesser dreams may also be realized. In that faith, the Hebrew Arts Committee plans to continue its daily routine of action, to serve the cause of the Hebrew Movement by enabling it to become a more integral part of American-Jewish life.

CORRECTION

Our attention has been called to a typographical error in our issue of April 2, in the article, "Franz Werfel's Journey," by Israel Knox. The author quoted a phrase from Keats, "fellowship with essence," which the article as printed erroneously ascribed to Kant. We regret the mistake.—*Editor.*

VICIOUS CLASS LEGISLATION

(Continued from Page 6)

try must not expect service from able men in civilian life for less than \$25,000 a year even in time of war. The man who, in a national crisis, is unwilling to give the best that is in him to the service of his country unless he is bribed by a salary in excess of \$25,000 deserves to be punished as a slacker, not to be rewarded by having exceptions made in his favor in the general stabilization legislation.

This is a moral issue which the forces of religion must not overlook. They were caught napping when they permitted the powers of social reaction to elect to Congress so many politicians whose social philosophy is one of "Business as usual and special privileges as usual." As the Rev. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman recently said in addressing the Town Hall Forum, "The Church must be concerned not only with leading the sheep but warding off the wolves." The wolves in Congress are ganging up against the whole social program of the New Deal. The significance of their action on the \$25,000 salary limit, is that it is symbolic of their social attitude. Let the public beware.

REALITIES AND VALUES

(Continued from Page 8)

Arabs say the interpretation excluding it is "artificial and forced." Badeau never hints that the Arab "uprisings" might have been subsidized by the Axis. He warns that setting up a Jewish state in Palestine would be done at the cost of arousing Moslem Near East distrust of the Democracies. By offering the Moslem Near East as a true judge of democratic ideas, Badeau reveals his bias. Isn't it rather strange, Dean, that the lamented Brigadier Kisch should have been in the front line in the fight for democracy, and

that the democracy-loving Arabs have had to be put down by British arms?

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DR. STEPHEN H. FRITCHMAN, editor of the Unitarian Christian Register, as quoted by the Religious News Service, urged a new alliance between the Church and Labor, with "ministers respecting picket lines, union labels on choir gowns and on church letterheads, and collective bargaining for the church's employees. The church must go from sermons to deed and practice what is preached. . . . Until then our words of comradeship with labor will echo with a hollow sound against the temple walls." This is sound doctrine and applies, of course, to the synagogue as well as the Church. Marked progress has recently been made in according the freedom of the pulpit for the discussion of social justice problems, but that is not enough. Social justice can easily be preached by the rabbi, pastor or priest; its practice by the congregation, however, is what counts most. There is an unfortunate tendency on the part of religious and other non-profit-making organizations to insist on inadequate wage scales and unsatisfactory working conditions on the ground that their employees should make sacrifices for the cause. That is unfair. Whatever sacrifices workers make for the cause should be contributed voluntarily and acknowledged publicly as are the large donations of the wealthy which do not even represent an equivalent sacrifice.

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THE STATE OF DELAWARE has recently passed a law "that it will be

lawful for any person treating human ills in accordance with the tenets of Christian Science to make an adequate charge for any services so performed." We expect any day now to hear that the practices of the voodoo man and witch doctor will receive similar sanction. It is all a matter of having an efficient and well-supported lobby to bring pressure on the legislature. People who have faith in Christian Science should be free to seek healing as a ministry of religion, and there is nothing to prevent Christian Scientists from supporting their ministers to enable them to do this work of healing. But the great saints who are credited with having performed miracles of healing through the faith they were able to inspire in their followers did not make a profession of their practice. Their healing was a ministry of love.

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NEW YORK CITY MAGISTRATE J. Ronald Sala has recently announced that he will bar from any court in which he is sitting any person responsible for the publication of news copy which identifies defendants in a trial according to race, religious creed or color. One of the most effective ways of libeling any group is to identify as belonging to it all the culprits in its midst. Every community has its black sheep, but to label them by the particular nationality, race, or religion to which they adhere gives the impression that their moral turpitude is inherent in the group to which they belong. Whether the judge's method of dealing with the situation is adequate may be questioned. Perhaps it needs the support of new legislation. But his attitude is certainly commendable.

Music Notes

By JUDITH K. EISENSTEIN

It is *Erev Pesah* and there are last minute chores to be done. To lighten our tasks we turn on the radio and are rewarded with the magnificent passages of the Saint Matthew Passion. It is also "Erev" Easter, and Bach's immortal music pours forth. What tremendous music it is! What compassion and love and faith it holds in its architectural structure, in its incredibly beautiful and ingenious weaving of voices under the traditional Reformation chorales! Immortal music we call it, and, alas, it helps to give immortality to that bitter anti-Jewish tale which has been, and which remains, the greatest single menace to our people.

It is *Erev Pesah*, our season of liberation from bondage, and what can we sing? Who indeed is there to sing in outcry, in protest? What have we to subdue the ringing tones of the Matthew Passion with its ultimate message of hate and destruction? We can look back on the season in this metropolis of New York, this greatest center of Jewish population in the whole world. Many items have already been discussed in these columns. Let us take as an illustration the brave attempt of Park Avenue Synagogue to present a service arranged by Cantor David Putterman and made up of important Jewish religious music.

Dear reader, at the time of its presentation, some weeks ago, this concert was most impressive. It held sternly to the highest standards of taste and discretion. It presented some new and unknown music to a large and enthusiastic audience: A Psalm of Thanksgiving and

Praise, based on the "Hebraic idiom," by a great Russian Gentile, Gretchaninoff; a lovely lyrical, ingratiating "Lekah Dodi," with Italian melodiousness for its medieval oriental cadences, composed by Castelnuovo-Tedesco; a charming Achron item, a fine little piece by Dessau. Here was the best, the very best of contemporary synagogue music.

Indeed, here was Jewish music, presented as well as we have heard it, by capable singers under the capable directorship of Max Helfman. But it is not enough. The finest music in the world, and the finest conductor, cannot carry over to an audience, when it is sung by a group, however skilled individually, who come together for a number of perfunctory rehearsals to prepare for a single event. No fourteen or fifteen voices can possibly, even with continued training, produce the effect of a full and rich chorus of at least one hundred souls. We have been told by people of authority that the "Adon Olam" of Achron, for example, is a great composition. On paper it is certainly awesome. But neither this group nor any other has ever performed it, within this writer's hearing, to reveal either greatness or beauty in actual sound.

There is still a crying need for large choruses, consisting, at least in half, of professional musicians, good singers who can read at sight and who know music. Amateur choruses and singing clubs have their important place, but we must have some one or two choral organizations made up of musicians, and conducted by specialists in choral conducting—not

composers, and not instrumentalists—who will be able to interpret our most complicated and valuable works. Perhaps then, at Passover time, there would be a group equipped to perform the Dessau "Haggadah" of which we have heard and read, but which is still unpublished and unperformed in this country. Perhaps such a composition as the "Ha-azinu," of Nowakowsky, might be dragged out of hiding, along with his other manuscripts, and brought to light and life.

Nor you, nor I, reader, have any idea of the existing music of the Jewish people. I have a notion that much more exists than we begin to be aware of. Even if it were all to be published, our seeing it in a library wouldn't answer the problem. Performing it would not help either, so long as it is performed superficially by improvised choral groups.

We need choruses and string quartets and individual singers who devote themselves to Jewish music.

But granted the existence of such choruses, and granted the eventual publication of all existing manuscripts of worth, we wonder still, on this Passover

even, and under the spell of Bach "Passion," whether any one has yet written the "Passion" of our own people. The pathetic, and somewhat weak-hearted bitterness of Koheleth has found its apotheosis in the Shelomo Rhapsody of Ernest Bloch. But where are the heroic "Passions" of our prophets? Where is our Passion of Moses who suffered so deeply; who led our ancestors out of bondage, and was so sorely tried by them that he committed the sin which lost him his great dream, the dream of entering the Promised Land? Where is our "Passion of Jeremiah," flung into the pit and tortured because he dared to give to his people the message which God's own voice dictated to him? Where is the "Passion of Job" who challenged God out of his torment and agony?

It is *Erev Pesah*. At this moment, it is impossible to criticize in fair and measured phrases the bits and pieces that have come through concert and recital. Our souls thirst for a Passion, and a voice to sing it. We are in sore need of the Passion of the Jewish People, crucified through the ages, and with its Resurrection still a tenuous dream.

Correspondence

On Listening to Bach's St. Matthew Passion

Sirs:

Listening to a performance of the Bach St. Matthew Passion, I confess that I experienced an uncomfortable feeling of guilt as I responded in deeply felt appreciation to the magnificence of the music. What was I, a Jew, doing in that audience listening with wrapt attention to the St. Matthew Passion—I and dozens and dozens of other Jews? More than that! Why was it Bruno Walter, a Jew, who was recreating the story of Jesus through the music which Bach had wrought with the perfection of simplicity and grandeur possible only at the hands of a great master? Why was it Bruno Walter, a Jew, who was evoking in us through the performance, the pain and the suffering and the anguish which the text proclaims?

I tried to rationalize my weak resistance to the beauty of the music with the explanation

that after all it was great music—and the text was irrelevant. But was it? It was terrifying! Behind the music arose images of European pogroms every Christian Easter. How easily could such pogroms happen here with an audience less well behaved than one in Carnegie Hall.

Yes, I resented Bruno Walter's fervid interpretation of the work—even though he could do no less as a great artist. But why did it have to be Bruno Walter, the Jew, who must so poignantly and eloquently, recreate the story which has so unhappily been the source of our pain and anguish and suffering?

I was resentful and disturbed. What is the answer? We have not produced a Bach to set our story to music in terms which could stir us with emotional forcefulness. The text is at hand! Will we some day produce a great master who will transmute it as profoundly? Would that we may!

—A devoted reader.